

# Grays Harbor County Department of Emergency Management Preparedness on the Harbor

Volume 1, Issue 2

November-December 2015

Disaster Classes a Hit

Summer Recaps

New Head of North  
Beach CERT

GHFD #2 Fire Chief  
Leonard Johnson  
Receives Plaque

Weather Spotters  
Needed

Ocosta School  
Update



## New Series of Classes for Emergency Preparedness Feeds Desire to Learn More

A question that has been frequently asked was, "Now that I've bought all this dried out disaster food, what do I do with it? How do I even cook with it?" So the idea was born, to do a series of classes during the winter months that teaches not only cooking classes, but disaster preparedness as a whole.

The Pacific Beach Resort and Conference Center (known as "The Base" to locals) in Pacific Beach offered to host the event in their conference center for free and open the classes to the public at large.

The first class was a big success with an overall attendance of 40 individuals ranging from guests staying locally, members of the North Beach communities and even a visitor from Pacific County.

More information is available in the article about the October class.



Clint Davis, Talking about the different ways to cook in a disaster.

# Summertime Fun in Grays Harbor County



## North Beach Community Fair a “Hit”, Sparks Interest for Others

After everything that happened in January, there had been a lot of discussion in the monthly [Citizen Corp](#) meetings about how the general public didn’t know which agencies to turn to for assistance, or for that matter, where to go to volunteer to help those in need.

Stephanie Allestad decided to change up GHFD#8’s National Night Out routine of the annual potluck, to hold a community fair instead. She then invited all the groups that attended those meetings, as well as other agencies in the county to come out. Eleven agencies were able to attend with others wanting to participate not only next year for the North Beach event, but for other events as well.

Some of the agencies attending included Emergency Management, who was gathering phone and email addresses for alerts.

CERT had 11 people sign up for classes. The Sea Mar Clinic had 2 booths giving people info about the services they provide. GH Volunteer Search & Rescue brought their dog team to recruit members.

Local groups joined to take advantage of the crowds to fundraise. GHFD#8 had a dunk tank to raise money for a new electronic reader board for their community center and had several “guest” victims, including Dep. Director Chuck Wallace.

Stephanie said, “The idea, is to have a draw for everyone. Information, interest in supporting a local group(s), food and something fun to do. It’s an easy format for any community or city to follow, and there is definitely an interest for these kind of events in our county.” *If you would info on putting on an event like this, Stephanie’s contact info can be found on the back page.*



*Photos by Daryl Brown*

## Not Just About Crime Prevention!

What started out as a national campaign to bring communities and neighborhoods together to help prevent crime, has now

become a collaboration of law & fire. At least in our county.

Communities and cities, like Montesano, held one large event in central locations or popular areas. Others, like Hoquiam, had a multitude of 12 neighborhood block parties. North Beach holds it’s event on the first Saturday in August, instead of the usual first Tuesday.

A common theme was challenges between Fire and Law. Bucket races, dunk tanks and relays. All in good fun, and showing their public that they are human, approachable and good losers.



*Photo by Brian Baldwin*



Local communities saw members of the Washington National Guard (WANG) the month of June testing their ability to respond to a catastrophic Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake and tsunami. Grays Harbor County. So far, the draft plan is extremely robust and will bring assistance to our county far quicker than ever expected.

Grays Harbor residents and ECC (Emergency Coordination Center) Volunteer Amateur Radio Operators Doyle Wenzel and George Stone were integral parts of the two day Military Communications exercise this past week in preparation for the June 2016 Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami exercise. “We were able to test many military facets the military has not had the chance to test with a working ECC. Military Components were represented by the WA Guard, National Guard and Air Force men and women.” reported Chuck Wallace.

Of course some barriers existed, as usually become evident during exercise and testing, but Wenzel and Stone made great suggestions on how to communicate during this exercise and for future real time events. Their suggestions will create easier and more fluid pathways for communication between military assets and amateur radio assets benefitting all jurisdictions and citizens nation wide.

Amateur radio operators are invaluable during disaster and will most likely be the ONLY way to communicate for assistance for the initial first days of any major disaster incident. Grays Harbor Emergency Management would like to thank not only George Stone and Doyle Wenzel for their outstanding commitment and volunteer efforts but wish to thank all other amateur radio operators who will become involved during true events for their volunteer efforts maintaining our communication lifeline.

*Story is a combination from Chuck Wallace and KBKW. Pictures courtesy of Chuck Wallace*



The articles recently presented in The New Yorker Magazine by Kathryn Schulz, *The Really Big One*, (July 20, 2015) and *How to Stay Safe When the Big One Comes*, (July 28, 2015), have caused a tremendous amount of discussion throughout the nation. For the most part, her information is right on the mark as to what could occur during a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake and resulting tsunami. However, while understanding her wish to channel her article's "emotion into action," it is apparent Ms. Schulz neglected to report on specific types of mitigation, prevention and safety plans which are in place in all coastal communities, to provide citizens and visitors the best chance of surviving an earthquake and possible tsunami.

In the City of Aberdeen WA, a coastal city in Grays Harbor County WA, Police Chief Bob Torgerson implemented a "Yellow Brick Road" signage program to help lead the citizens to higher ground and safety during an earthquake and tsunami event. The Quinault Indian Nation has initiated the same type program, as has the Shoalwater Bay Tribe in Tokeland WA. This type of program will save many lives by getting the affected to high ground prior to the impact of tsunami. Our schools take the possibility of disaster seriously. Twice each year they practice Drop, Cover and Hold On drills to teach students what they should do during an earthquake. During The Great Shakeout Exercise in October, (modeled after the California Great Shakeout Earthquake exercise), every school in our county practices Drop Cover and Hold On, then students, faculty and staff evacuate the school to their assigned assembly areas which are in tsunami safe areas.

The Ocosta School District just outside of Westport WA is currently building the first Vertical Evacuation, Tsunami Safe Haven building in North America. This was driven by a community desiring to keep their children and the school's teachers and employees safe should Cascadia decide to occur. This was modeled from Project Safe Haven which was initiated by WA State Emergency Management Division, The WA Department of Natural Resources, the University of Washington, and FEMA. The new elementary school, with engineering to withstand multiple earthquakes and the impact from numer-

ous tsunami, is based upon Japanese tsunami safe haven buildings, all which endured the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami.

The mitigation practices for earthquake and tsunami in Washington State are based upon our worst case scenario. We have a deliberate tactic towards community preparedness education which we base upon an all hazards approach to disaster. Each person, home, business and government building has a site specific risk to specific hazards. Understanding those hazards and their associated risk is where we learn how best to reduce the impact of any particular disaster event upon our families and community creating the foundation for resilience.

According to some researchers and scientists, the odds for the next Cascadia earthquake are 1 in 3 in the next 50 years. Could it occur? Absolutely! Will it occur within that time frame? Let's all hope it doesn't. Does that mean everyone should flee their communities or not visit West coast beaches because of a prediction? I think not. Where would we go? If we decided to move to Missouri, or Arkansas, Illinois or Kentucky we are at risk from the New Madrid Earthquake which is predicted to have 87,000 casualties and billions of dollars in losses. California is out... San Andreas Fault. Perhaps Oklahoma...no, that's tornado alley. How about Florida and the Gulf States? No way, we've all heard about Katrina. How about the Mid-Atlantic States? No, they had an earthquake a few years ago. I remember reading they just finished repairing the damage to the Washington Monument. As you can see, every place has issues when it comes to disaster.

There isn't a community in the world that can state they meet the threshold to be considered truly "Resilient". Even New York City, the most funded, trained and prepared city in the U.S. was not able to handle the issues presented by Superstorm Sandy. Japan, considered to be the most disaster prepared country in the world, suffered severely from the Tohoku earthquake and resulting tsunami in 2011, because of a belief they were "prepared enough".

The occurrence of the Cascadia Earthquake and resulting Tsunami will be devastating to all. If we recognize the need for continued work to help reduce the impacts

The entire county will be issued a ballot this year for the November 3 General Election, as long as a resident is registered, their voting registration is Active, and their information is current.

It takes just a few moments to register to vote or check your status online at [MyVote.wa.gov](http://MyVote.wa.gov), but that is not the only way to make sure your vote is counted. If you are concerned about your status, contact your Elections Department and ask if you are Active.

If not, you can register online or change your address and update information in person. Have you changed your address or name recently? Updating your driver's license does NOT automatically transfer your information.

Make sure that your vote is counted and your voice is heard in the General Election.

**10/5/2015:** Deadline for mail or online new registrations and voter updates prior to the General Election

**10/26/2015:** Last day for in-person registration in order to vote in the General Election

## Grays Harbor County Department of Emergency Management



# Contacts & Info

All Hazards Alert Broadcast (AHAB) Sirens occur the first Monday of every month at noon.

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**Office Hours:**  
Monday - Friday  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

**LIKE** the GHCDM Facebook page at  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Grays-Harbor-County-Emergency-Management](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grays-Harbor-County-Emergency-Management)  
follow frequent emergency management and preparedness dialogue.

**RECEIVE** the latest emergency management information, hazardous weather notices, and bi-monthly newsletter by signing up for the GHCDM email list. Provide your information safely online via GHCDM's website.  
<http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/DEM/EMailTWS.asp>

**ATTEND** the Grays Harbor Citizen Corp meetings the second Tuesday of every month at 9am, at the Grays Harbor County EOC. Located in Forestry Building.

Meet with other county agencies and organizations working on disaster preparedness in our county. Check out their Facebook page too.  
[www.facebook.com/GraysHarborCitizenCorps](http://www.facebook.com/GraysHarborCitizenCorps)

**FOLLOW @GHCDM** on Twitter to get updates from the Grays Harbor County EOC when it is Activated for up to date emergency information.

**VISIT** the GHCDM website at  
[www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/DEM](http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/DEM)  
for valuable preparedness materials and to learn about hazards prone to Grays Harbor County.

### Upcoming Events And Articles

**Next Newsletter Deadline  
December 18th**

**Disasters & Dunktanks  
August 1st, Noon to 4pm  
Pacific Beach Elementary  
11 4th St, Pacific Beach**

**Packing for a Disaster**  
Do you have everything you and your family need for a "Go Pack"

**Grays Harbor Volunteer  
Search And Rescue**  
What does the team have to offer?

**Article & Photo Credit**  
Back cover photo provided by Michael Bruce

Hoquiam slide photos and Johnson Award story from KBKW and Hoquiam PD Chief Jeff Myers  
Group and award photo from Brian Baldwin GHFD#2